

What to Do When You're Bored With Your Routines

April 03, 2019

Last spring I started a new exercise class. As someone who dislikes doing jumping jacks, burpees and push-ups, I found the workouts surprisingly enjoyable — at least for a while. But after several months, my newish hobby began to feel like watching the same episode of a TV sitcom over and over again. Overly familiar with the class routine, my excitement had been replaced with boredom, a nattering emotion that affects us all.

A [2016 study](#) estimated that 63 percent of us suffer from boredom at least once over a 10-day period. While it certainly won't kill us, [researchers](#) have found that chronically bored people are more prone to depression, substance use and anxiety.

Even though we all feel apathetic from time to time, according to Mary Mann, a researcher and author of "[Yawn: Adventures in Boredom](#)," talking about it can be embarrassing because it's often seen as being self-inflicted. "Only boring people get bored" seems to be a popular belief, Ms. Mann said.

But boredom isn't a character flaw. It's a state brought on by a behavioral phenomenon called [hedonic adaptation](#): the tendency for us to get used to things over time. This explains why initially gratifying activities and relationships can sometimes lose their luster.

"Humans are remarkably good at growing accustomed to the positive and negative changes in their lives," said [Sonja Lyubomirsky](#), a professor of psychology at the University of California, Riverside, who studies [hedonic adaptation](#).

Sometimes this is a good thing, like when "it comes to adversities like losing a loved one, divorce or downsizing," Ms. Lyubomirsky said. "We adjust fairly well, but this same flexibility can be detrimental to how we respond to positive life events."